

Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD)  
Performance Progress Report - PDG B-5 Renewal  
Quarter 2 - Date: June 29, 2021

**Activity 1: Statewide Needs Assessment**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments**

*Needs Assessment Follow-up*

In Q2, the review of the Request for Sealed Proposals (RFSP) was completed and the contract has been awarded to American Institutes of Research (AIR). The contract is in the process of being executed.

*PN3 Policy Agenda Infant/Toddler Pull-out*

Erikson Institute is partnering with the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) to secure most of the data for the Prenatal to Three (PN3) supplement of the Risk and Reach Report. In Q2, partners worked to narrow the list of indicators down to those specific to prenatal to three but also that can be disaggregated down to children ages two and under.

*Infant Toddler Road Map*

The contract for this project has been executed.

**2. Problems – N/A**

*PN3 Policy Agenda Infant/Toddler Pull-out*

There have been delays in receiving the data needed for the supplement. In addition, there were delays in finalizing the initial Risk and Reach Report, which impacted the timeline.

**3. Significant findings and events – N/A**

**4. Dissemination activities – N/A**

**5. Other activities – N/A**

**6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

*Needs Assessment Follow-up*

In Q3, Illinois will execute the contract and the update of Needs Assessment will begin.

*PN3 Policy Agenda Infant/Toddler Pull-out*

In Q3, Illinois will secure missing data and conduct the Phase I data quality review.

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*Infant Toddler Roadmap*

In Q3, Illinois will confirm the workplan with our selected vendor/partner.

**Activity 2: Strategic Plan**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments**

*Illinois PDG B-5 Strategic Plan*

During Q2, the contract was awarded to the Morten Group to provide consultation services for the development of an updated Strategic Plan that represents Illinois' mixed delivery system. In addition, the Morten Group will assist with embedding an equity approach within the process and outcome.

*Home Visiting/Child Welfare Initiative*

The Erikson Team of Home Visiting Specialists (HVS) assisted in identifying 88 families that were eligible for home visiting services. They also supported the identification of 27 home visiting agencies that utilize internal/external Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/ECMHC) and four agencies that do not. In May, through the support of the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, a "Home Visiting Funder Requirements for Families with Child Welfare Involvement" document was developed that outlines enrollment requirements across the major funders of home visiting in Illinois.

*Analysis of Illinois' State Advisory Councils*

Erikson Institute was awarded the contract to provide consultation for the analysis of Illinois' State Advisory Councils. Initial collection of data for textual analysis related to mandated and non-mandated advisory councils in each of the departments has been completed. A draft of the initial scan is in progress.

*Analysis & Consultation for the Early Learning Council*

Erikson Institute was awarded the contract to provide consultation for the structuring of the newly appointed Illinois Early Learning Council (ELC) membership. A spreadsheet has been developed that outlines the ELC landscape inclusive of committee membership and equitable representation.

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## *Analysis of Illinois' State Funded PD System*

Work for this project has not begun. Currently, planning is underway while identification of a contractor is finalized.

## *Early Childhood Transformation Team*

The contract for this project was executed. A Project Director and Program Manager have been retained. The focus of the Early Childhood Transformation Team will be the establishment of Regional and Community Systems and the analysis of state funding mechanisms as outlined in the Funding Commission Report.

## *Support Integration Projects from Commission*

The contract was executed with Afton Partners. A first draft of the Funding Adequacy Model has been completed. Geographic mapping design planning is underway, and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) final model update was completed.

## *Head Start/Early Head Start Cross-System Capacity Building*

This new project will fill a gap in understanding current implementation and capacity for cross-system integration. The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) has received a contract to implement this new project and has identified a consultant to support the work.

## **2. Problems**

### *Analysis of Illinois' State Funded PD System*

Due to the delay in contracting, the identified subcontractor took on another project. Another contractor is being identified to complete the scope of work.

## **3. Significant findings and events**

### *Home Visiting/Child Welfare Initiative*

The Erikson Team of Home Visiting Specialists are preparing for the statewide Families First Prevention Services Act training on home visiting services in August for intact agencies.

### *Analysis of Illinois' State Advisory Councils*

Provisional findings provide a map of Illinois child- and family-serving advisory councils including their origin, legal status, membership, and functioning.

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## *Analysis & Consultation for the Early Learning Council*

An initial scan of publicly available data informed an understanding of the current restructuring and governance guidelines for the ELC and will guide the interview protocol. Consultants reviewed publicly available data related to the history and current functioning of the ELC. In addition, the racial equity activity of the committee was reviewed. Consultants attended the June 2021 ELC meeting, focused on orienting the newly appointed members.

## **4. Dissemination activities**

### *Home Visiting/Child Welfare Initiative*

The Erikson Team of Home Visiting Specialists created a presentation for their meetings with the MIECHV supervisor and coordinated intake workers. The presentation focused on increasing awareness and understanding of the different programs, as well as streamlining referral pathways and strengthening partnerships.

### *Analysis of Illinois' State Advisory Councils*

A draft annotated outline for the final report has been completed.

### *Analysis & Consultation for the Early Learning Council*

An initial framework for the final report has been drafted.

### *Early Childhood Transformation Team*

A position announcement for the open position on the Early Childhood Transformation Team was posted to the Northern Illinois University website and disseminated via the GOECD monthly newsletter.

## **5. Other activities – N/A**

## **6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

### *Illinois PDG B-5 Strategic Plan*

Work that uses a racial equity/social justice framework will begin with the Morten Group.

### *Home Visiting/Child Welfare Initiative*

In Q3, the project will continue to: make and monitor referrals to home visiting; facilitate cross-training of child welfare and home visiting providers; refine data sharing

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policy and procedures; and survey home visiting programs again about their use of I/ECMHC. Intact workers across the State will engage in the statewide Families First training, including a focus on home visiting services.

## *Analysis of Illinois' State Advisory Councils*

A meeting has been scheduled with Illinois' Early Childhood Leadership, and identification of key informants/introduction for interviews will occur.

## *Analysis of Illinois' State Funded PD System*

In Q3, a contract will be executed and work will begin to analyze the early childhood education and care professional development system to a) study and breakdown the policies, contracts, competencies, content or coursework, quality assurances, diversity and equitable access, and other areas as identified, and b) outline and explain the various parts of the early childhood professional development system and how they relate to one another.

## *Early Childhood Transformation Team*

In Q3, the Early Childhood Transformation Team will revise their scope of work and logic model. Candidates for the open position will be identified and hired, and an overview will be provided to the Early Childhood Leadership Team.

## *Support Integration Projects from Funding Commission*

In Q3, Afton Partners will complete funding adequacy model enhancements; develop a geographic mapping framework and model shell; establish geographic mapping participation, access, and expenditure data; and complete Child Care Restoration Grant (CCRG) financial modeling. In addition, Afton Partners will facilitate kick-off meetings with key stakeholder groups.

## *Head Start/Early Head Start Cross-System Capacity Building*

The consultant contract will be executed, and work will begin to describe the landscape of existing organizations/programs (at the site level if possible) layering state and federal funding streams to support comprehensive services.

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**Activity 3: Maximizing Parent & Family Knowledge, Choice, & Engagement**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments**

*Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

In Q2, the FAC completed their orientation and initial professional development training series. GOECD and backbone agency, Illinois Action for Children, discussed various protocols, Early Learning Council (ELC) expectations, governance, and logistical concerns regarding format and framework for FAC meetings. The FAC members developed their committee agenda and goals, which are focused on increasing child care enrollment, creation of a family engagement framework, and inclusion. The FAC hosted their initial public meeting virtually on May 27, 2021. Sixteen FAC members and over 30 participants attended.

*Parent Cafés*

In Q2, the Illinois Head Start Association (IHSA) compiled end of project data and evaluations for the Parent Café cohort since it was extended to allow for the participation of additional support organizations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A summary of the final data includes the following: 17 organizations trained 59 Parent Leaders and facilitated a total of 64 Parent Cafés for 586 parents.

There were many lessons learned from this cohort, such as the need for more training on effective parent engagement, additional training on implementing Parent Cafés, additional coaching, and a digital platform to submit documents. These new learnings were implemented during the middle of the quarter as IHSA planned for a new cohort of organizations to implement Parent Cafés. An updated application, a new guidebook with an infant/toddler focus, and a new extended orientation training were created. Currently, the nine organizations in the new cohort participated in the initial orientation in June 2021. The application window remained open through the beginning of July 2021.

*PN3 Public Communication & Engagement Support*

The contract with Start Early was executed in June. They are beginning collaboration with a contractor who will support creation of the communication framework to engage parents and communities.

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## **2. Problems**

### *Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

The creation of the statewide parent committee is new and therefore requires some initial level setting and clarity around the role of the FAC and its members as it sits within the ELC as an advisory body convened by GOECD.

### *Parent Cafés*

Some agencies did not fulfill their obligation to conduct Parent Cafés for the families within their communities. It was also difficult to obtain final data from some organizations, so IHSA decided to create a digital platform for cohort 2 to submit documents.

### *PN3 Public Communication & Engagement Support*

Start Early is new to navigating our fiscal agent's budgeting process; it is taking time to input the necessary contract supporting documents into the system.

## **3. Significant findings and events**

### *Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

FAC parent leaders stated how beneficial the orientation process was in preparing them to serve on the FAC. They mentioned the onboarding trainings and professional development series did not compare to other parent groups on which they have served and felt this process could be a model for other parent advisory boards/councils.

### *Parent Cafés*

This year's model of selecting 18 agencies to conduct Parent Cafés was new. A lot was learned about how to best support the agencies using this model. IHSA also had to be flexible and provided additional support to agencies whose infrastructure made it difficult to provide some of the parent incentives, which are important components of the Parent Café model.

## **4. Dissemination activities**

### *Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

GOECD highlighted the FAC's initial meeting in a monthly newsletter disseminated to approximately 7,000 Illinoisans, as well as in the Governor's Office internal newsletter distributed to staff.

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*Parent Cafés*

Parent Café recruitment flyers and an application were disseminated to the field by IHSA.

**5. Other activities**

*Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

Several requests were made from various agencies for FAC parents to participate in focus groups and on an advisory committee for the special education department at Northeastern Illinois University. A request was made for GOECD to advise on how the diverse structure within the FAC was achieved to inform the formation of a new program within Chicago that will have a similar structure. One FAC parent was invited to participate as a parent panelist in a statewide conference, *Equity from the Start: Reimagining the Early Childhood System*. She discussed the role that families/parents have in impacting systems change in the Illinois early childhood education and care system.

**6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

*Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

The planned activities for Q3 include potential collaboration with MIECHV on the FAC goal of researching and increasing enrollment in early childhood education and care programs and services; potential collaboration with the ELC Inclusion Subcommittee; and a budget review and planning preview for FY22.

*Parent Cafés*

In Q3, the planned activities are to complete the application/selection process for participating agencies, training with program staff, an updated guidebook with new focus on infants/toddlers, and the training of parent leaders, as well as to begin supporting agencies in training additional parents and organizing Parent Cafés.

*PN3 Public Communication & Engagement Support*

In Q3, Start Early will create a final action plan with a vendor that is to propose a marketing and communication plan/campaign to engage parents and communities.

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**Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices & Professional Development for the Workforce**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments**

*Facilitating Attuned Interactions Training (FAN)*

Twenty participants are enrolled in the Supervisor FAN training (106 expressed interest for the 20 available slots) with participants from various Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs. Part 1 of the Supervisor FAN cohort was held May 17, 2021. Two HS/EHS FAN Trainer candidates were identified to support sustaining FAN training in HS/EHS. Communities of Practice (CoP) continue, and the menu for CoP curriculum options have been updated to include: Self-Compassion, Repair, Mindful Self-Regulation, Supporting Supervisors, FAN and Caregiving Partners, Supporting Big Feelings, and more.

*Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC) continues to support six child care centers (and their respective Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) and Process Coaches) and four child care centers as part of the Activity Five ExceleRate Pilot. PMC hosted an informational meeting for six family child care programs (from two CCR&Rs) to give programs an opportunity to learn more about Pyramid Model implementation and what to expect. The official launch will take place in July 2021; these child care educators are all Spanish-speaking and the events will be led in Spanish, as such. The Process Coaches embedded in the CCR&Rs are being supported in this new role through trainings, monthly check-in meetings, and additional one-on-one support from a long-time Process Coach.

*Gateways Registry: Pyramid Model Trainers & Coaches*

Local delivery of Pyramid Model trainings continues to be submitted and scheduled through Gateways; registry-approved trainings and professional development trainings offered by PMC are entered into the Gateways system for ongoing tracking. New child care implementation sites have begun to build their Leadership Teams and are collecting baseline Early Childhood Benchmarks of Quality data points. All data collection instruments for training, coaching, and leadership teams have updated evaluations. New links have been shared with the Process Coaches and a live Question and Answer session with Process Coaches was held to support their use of the tools.

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## *Inclusion Professional Development System*

In Q2, fifty providers met for a cross-system professional development Community of Practice (CoP) in April, May, and June. Intensive professional learning and technical assistance with three QRIS Pilot child care centers continues with Prairieland Child Care in Morris, Little Angels in Harrisburg, and Centralia Mary's House in Centralia. The three programs participated in two webinars, *Adapting for Each & Every Child: CARA's Kit*, one which focused on 3-5-year-olds and one which focused on infants and toddlers. The three Community Inclusion Teams (CIT) in Mannheim, Collinsville, and Springfield continue to meet monthly and inclusion specialists have met with the CIT leads bi-monthly to plan for the CIT meetings. The *Preschool Inclusion Toolbox* series continued with presentations on April 15, May 20, and June 17, 2021, from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center and National Center for Pyramid Model Implementation team.

## *Gateways Registry: Home Visiting Enhancement*

Email notifications were sent throughout the state's home visiting workforce to notify home visitors to register or update their profiles in the Gateways Registry system. A total of 1,571 home visitors are registered in the system, with over 64% (total of 1,007 home visitors) reporting on the model of their home visiting program.

## *Competency-Based Education (CBE) Modularization*

The implementation of previously designed competency modules is in progress at three of the five institutions who were able to get an "early start" by launching the pilot during the spring semester. Those three institutions have also received initial survey responses from a small number of students and faculty. In June, all five institutions launched their summer semesters of coursework, offering classes with the modules embedded.

## *Gateways: Linkage Project*

Meetings have been held between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) to discuss databases and data sharing agreements. ISBE will meet internally to discuss agreements. Discussions were held regarding the inclusion of the ESL/Bilingual Credential, which will require linkage between the Gateways Registry and the ISBE system.

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## *Gateways: Credential Fees*

Information about the Gateways Credential application fee waivers was shared with the early childhood workforce via social media and the Gateways Registry newsletter(s); it was also shared with the statewide CCR&R directors, and information was placed on the Gateways website. Significant numbers of the early childhood workforce in Illinois submitted Gateways Credential applications to take advantage of the financial support provided by this credential fee waiver. During this reporting period 1,371 credential applications have been received. Individuals who had not yet renewed their Gateways Credential in 2019 or 2020 (during the COVID-19 pandemic) were identified. A phased approach and outreach strategy were developed to reach these non-renewed individuals as follows: email blasts were sent to approximately 500 individuals who had one or more credentials that expired in 2019. Then on May 19 and May 28, 2021, more than 2,200 individuals with 2020 expired credentials were emailed to renew for free. Approximately 3,600 individuals whose credentials are set to expire in 2021 were notified via email of this renewal opportunity.

## *Gateways: Education Reimbursement*

One hundred and ninety (190) applications were received during this reporting period. Thirty-seven thousand five hundred forty-four (\$37,440) dollars have been obligated to eligible providers seeking assistance with outstanding student debt or reimbursement for payments made to accredited Illinois colleges and universities.

## *Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohorts (EC4) Expansion*

The Illinois Board of Higher Education completed amendments to Year One institutional recipients and provided them with Year Two funding for new cohorts of students with the additional allocation. In some cases, institutional recipients are carrying forward with the same cohort of students from Year One, working with them to achieve a next-level set of credentials in field; all institutions are considering how they might reengage the limited number of candidates who needed to opt out during Year One and invite their continued participation in Year Two.

## *Gateways: Infant/Toddler Credential Modules*

In April, a Request for Proposal (RFP) with a corresponding rubric was created and sent to the Gateways higher education faculty and Deans listserv regarding the Illinois Gateways to Opportunity Infant Toddler Competency project opportunity. State and national experts were identified to lead the work. The state expert consultants, Drs. Anni Reinking and Toni Potenza, have signed contracts to lead the work of this project which will mirror the previous (successful) Gateways ECE Credential Competency

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Project. In addition, a national consultant, the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN), was contracted to provide overarching guidance and direction to the project. Mentoring faculty from two institutions, Heartland Community College and National Louis University, that participated in the Gateways ECE Credential Competency Project were contracted and added to the leadership of the project in order to assist in the guidance and to provide additional faculty support. A kick-off meeting was held on June 30, 2021, with faculty and deans to outline the project, answer questions, and assign work groups. Contracts have been drafted for each higher education institution and will be shared with them following the June 30, 2021, kickoff.

### *Gateways Scholarship Program*

Approximately forty individuals have been prescreened for scholarship eligibility at this time. Prescreening for eligible applicants began on June 1, 2021, and the allocation of these funds will begin on July 1, 2021. The written report with the number of eligible applicants and total budget amount obligated will be shared by July 30, 2021.

### *ECE Competency-Based B.A. Program*

National Louis University (NLU) recruited 50 students for the ECE Competency Pilot. They hosted three virtual information sessions over Zoom between April 27 and May 15, 2021. NLU also conducted outreach to the 200 participants that attended the information sessions. Sixty-two students have been admitted into the Competency Pilot. Students have received support with the application process, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and securing transcripts. The Chicago Early Childhood Workforce Partnership has an Employer's Council that NLU has worked closely with to design this pilot. There are 19 large child care agencies that comprise this council. The council has been able to secure philanthropic funding to help support these six students in paying off their existing debt so they can continue their efforts towards degree attainment. NLU will offer fully online courses with a weekly one hour "competency café" requirement. Students will have a choice of three day/time combinations to join a café and receive support, talk with Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) coaches, and receive new content, as needed. These cafés will be offered initially over Zoom with the option to add face-to-face options later, if students want it and health conditions support it. Due to the student population at NLU, faculty and PLA coaches who are bilingual in English and Spanish are needed to work on this project. A Professional Adjunct Lecturer has been hired with deep connections to the early childhood workforce and demonstrated fluency in Spanish and English. Three additional new adjuncts who are bilingual in Spanish and English have been recruited and will be well prepared to start teaching on July 26, 2021.

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## *Family Specialist Credential Modules*

Initial invitation was sent to over 150 faculty and deans at two- and four-year institutions to partner in becoming entitled for the Gateways Family Specialist Credential. Institutions that responded included Elgin Community College, St. Augustine College, Erikson Institute, Rasmussen University, Chicago State University, Southwestern Illinois College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois at Springfield, National Louis University, and Heartland Community College. As of mid-June, three institutions have signed agreements to become entitled for the Family Specialist Credential by completing and submitting an application: Heartland Community College, Elgin Community College, and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Discussions have been held and preliminary agreements have also been extended to Chicago State University, Erikson Institute, and Rasmussen University and are pending return.

## *ECE Level 5 to PEL Pathway*

State and national consultants and content experts were identified to lead this project after discussion with partners at GOECD. The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) is fortunate that the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN) will play a leading role in bringing national guidance and expertise in competency development, early childhood, and licensure to this work (contract is being finalized). Additionally, both the University of Illinois at Champaign and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville will participate through state consulting contracts (which are now being finalized). In April, a one question survey was sent to all 30 of the 4-year Illinois institutions that have a Professional Educator License (PEL) with an early childhood endorsement asking if they have a pathway for students with a Gateways ECE Credential Level 5 to obtain the PEL. All but five institutions responded to this survey indicating nearly a dozen different and varied pathways from the Gateways ECE Level 5 to PEL attainment in Illinois. In May and June 2021, 30 institutions were invited to participate in a kick-off meeting to partner in identifying a statewide set of competencies and a cohesive pathway to a PEL to provide transparency for the early childhood workforce. More than half of Illinois institutions invited have agreed to partner in this critical work.

## *Prior Learning Assessment Articulation/Transfer Planning*

State and national lead consultants were identified for this project. Consulting experts will facilitate discussions and ensure buy-in and support of faculty from a range of institutions across the State. In addition, The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) will utilize the national Competency Based Education

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Network's (C-BEN) expertise in building scalable virtual assessment systems for this Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Project. After discussions, it was decided the PLA project will focus on the Gateways ECE Credential Level 2 competencies. A state agency planning meeting was held in June, along with a statewide kickoff/informational meeting on June 24, 2021, to which all Gateways entitled higher education institutions were invited. There were more than 70 attendees at the June Kickoff meeting. Contracts have been issued to both state and national consultants. State consultants have created a timeline and a PLA project outline that will be shared at the first working meeting, which is planned for the week of July 12, 2021.

## **2. Problems**

### *Facilitating Attuned Interactions Training (FAN)*

A Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) Train the Trainer was delayed from its projected launch in April 2021. In early April, the organization opted to postpone training until June due to supervisor availability challenges/staff turnover; due to additional scheduling challenges, the site opted to cancel the June training. Both FAN Training Candidates resigned from their respective positions at the organization. After careful coordination with the Illinois HS/EHS leadership and the individual FAN Trainer candidates, it was decided that the original Trainer Candidates will remain in their roles as HS/EHS FAN Trainers and FAN Training would be rescheduled for July 2021.

### *Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

The launch of Pyramid Model with Family Child Care was delayed due to Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC) finalizing the ePyramid modules in Spanish as well as scheduling challenges.

### *Gateways Registry: Pyramid Model Trainers & Coaches*

Submission of trainings outside the local Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies for local training delivery of Pyramid Model training modules has been inconsistent. There are also challenges with integrating data of Illinois participants who have completed the self-paced online training modules for Gateways Registry credit. Both challenges are agenda items on bi-weekly cross-sector Pyramid Model meetings to work towards resolution.

### *Inclusion Professional Development System*

The Community Inclusion Teams (CITs) started relationships to include implementation sites in child care and Head Start locations; however, due to the stress of the pandemic

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the plans have been scaled back and it is hard for the community-based organizations to participate in the monthly meetings to further the conversation.

## *Gateways Registry: Home Visiting Enhancement*

While not a significant problem, reaching the entire home visiting workforce throughout Illinois took a couple more weeks than planned. As a result, the final deliverable will be completed on July 15, 2021 rather than June 30, 2021, resulting in the completion of this project.

## *Gateways: Linkage Project*

ISBE continues work on a data system that will eventually be integrated with the State's Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) 2.0.

### **3. Significant findings and events**

#### *Facilitating Attuned Interactions Training (FAN)*

A summary of feedback for the Supervisor FAN cohort (both parts 1 and 2) and the Train the Trainer Cohort 1 for Head Start/Early Head Start will be available in the next quarterly report.

#### *Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

In Q2 the following events occurred: Targeted Strategies to Support Inclusion (April 8); Practice Based Coaching in a Group (April 12-13); Practice Based Coaching Peer-to-Peer (April 20-21); TPOT Booster (April 23); TPOT (April 27-28); and Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children (May 10).

#### *Inclusion Professional Development System*

The response to the Community of Practice has been very positive. The range of engagement varies from date to date, and some participants are more eager to share than others. The Community Inclusion Teams (CITs) have completed their baseline assessments and created action plans to initialize the work. Additionally, CITs have identified leadership teams and completed a baseline assessment with action plans to keep the work moving in the fall.

#### *Gateways Registry: Home Visiting Enhancement*

Of the 1,571 registered home visitors, 201 home visitors reported using Baby TALK, 98 reported using Early Head Start Home-Based, 175 reported using Healthy Families Illinois, 11 reported using Nurse Family Partnership, and 522 reported using Parents as Teachers home visiting models. Additionally, 25 registrants reported none for their

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model and will not be included in the data analysis that is specific to the home visiting workforce. Finally, 539 registrants remain unreported, indicating that registrants have not updated their profiles or may no longer be working in the home visiting field.

## *Competency-Based Education (CBE) Modularization*

All institutions are offering classes using the modularized Early Childhood Education competencies during the summer semester, so it is anticipated the number of responses will increase greatly among students and faculty. Feedback and data analysis of the survey returns is imperative to help identify any modules that need modifications.

## *Gateways: Linkage Project*

INCCRRA continues to expand and enhance the Gateways Registry for eventual linkage to the ILDS 2.0. The remainder of the project will focus on connectors with ISBE.

## *Gateways: Credential Fees*

There was a 70% increase in credential applications received by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) from Q2 in 2021 compared to Q2 in 2020. This response from the field validates that the \$65 credential application fee is a significant barrier to the (underpaid) early childhood education and care workforce.

## *Gateways: Education Reimbursements*

Previously funded applicants that are still incurring debt at accredited Illinois higher education institutions seem to be more responsive compared to new applicants. These applicants are still pursuing coursework and demonstrate this support is needed to help them continue their educational goals.

## *Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort (EC4) Expansion*

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has had conversations with institutional leaders. In those conversations the leaders have shared anecdotally that retention in Year One cohorts had been substantially aided by the presence of mentors, coaches, and supportive advising, coupled with peer support within the cohorts. The complications of the pandemic, coupled with interruptions in early learning and care workplaces, presented substantial challenges for many candidates in the cohorts. However, these additional forms of support were cited by institutional leaders, via direct comments from their candidates, as critical to success.

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## *Gateways: Infant/Toddler Credential Modules*

Nine higher education institutions submitted applications for this project. Applications received were from both two- and four- year institutions, public and private and regionally diverse. Consultants (state and national) were secured, and a project timeline was developed to ensure completion before December 30, 2021.

## *ECE Competency-Based B.A. Program*

One of the significant findings is although many students already have an Associate's Degree, they still need quite a few general education courses before taking their major courses (competency-based courses, in this case). As the pilot progresses, it will be important to address this barrier so students can meet the licensure requirements for general education without needing to take on the burden of additional courses.

## *Family Specialist Credential Modules*

Three institutions have signed agreements to participate in the initiative and three institutions have pending agreements.

## *ECE Level 5 to PEL Pathway*

Higher Education Institutions were responsive both to the survey and to participating in this project. Having more than 50% of the institutions in Illinois with needed program and faculty knowledge indicate a willingness to dedicate time and expertise to this project is significant and will be key to the project's overall success.

## *Prior Learning Assessment Articulation/Transfer Planning*

There was strong interest in the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) project from faculty, deans, and registrars across both two- and four- year institutions. The pre-planning meeting was held on June 17, 2021, with national expert representatives from C-BEN, state faculty consultants, and state agency representatives including: Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Community College Board, and Illinois Board of Higher Education, along with the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. The goal of the meeting was to review the project and the outcomes anticipated, and to ensure state agencies gave their support to the project.

## **4. Dissemination activities**

### *Facilitating Attuned Interactions Training (FAN)*

A menu of Community of Practice curriculum was developed by Erikson's curriculum team and disseminated to the five trainers assigned to this project.

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## *Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

The Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC) continues to disseminate the model and supporting materials to the child care programs via the ePyramid modules.

### *Gateways Registry: Pyramid Model Trainers & Coaches*

Formative data were shared this quarter, including summaries of feedback from professional development events and from Process Coach logs. Ongoing dissemination of data in the [2020 Pyramid Model Evaluation](#) will occur through the development of infographics or one to three page briefs targeted at both broad and more targeted audiences.

### *Inclusion Professional Development System*

Community Inclusion Teams requested public awareness materials; therefore, the State Leadership Team created an infographic and shared updates via written announcements to GOECD, the Illinois State Board of Education Superintendents' newsletter, and the Illinois Association of Administrators of Special Education newsletter.

### *Gateways Registry: Home Visiting Enhancement*

Email notifications were sent to the following groups: Illinois Early Learning Council's Home visiting Task Force; the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program; the major funders of home visiting; the four home visiting communities in Illinois' PDG B-5 Bonus Activity on Coordinated Application, Eligibility, and Enrollment; the GOECD newsletter; Start Early; and Start Early's Training and Technical Assistance group.

### *Competency-Based Education (CBE) Modularization*

During the Gateways to Opportunity Higher Education Forum, an update on the ECE Credential Competency project was provided, and all faculty attendees were provided with an overview of the project's next steps (pilot implementation). This information was also shared during the May virtual Zoom conversation with higher education faculty and state agencies.

### *Gateways: Credential Fees*

The Gateway's website was used to publicly announce the \$65 Gateways Credential application fee waiver. The online payment system was also disabled for those applying for credentials to ensure payments were not inadvertently sent in with credential applications. As noted above, social media and a variety of newsletters shared the

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credential fee waiver announcement statewide in an effort to reach as many members of the early childhood educator workforce as possible.

### *Gateways: Education Reimbursements*

Communication was sent to Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Family Child Care Providers, Group Home Providers, Family Child Care Assistants, and Group Home Assistants working in Illinois Department of Children and Family Services licensed programs to share reimbursement program information. Additionally, emails were sent to Head Start/Early Head Start, Illinois State Board of Education, as well as Gateways Scholarship Program financial aid contacts, and Gateways Credential entitled route faculty contacts to share reimbursement program information within their networks. Additional outreach was sent to Child Care Resource and Referral Directors to share reimbursement program information within their networks. Outreach via an email blast was sent to previously funded reimbursement recipients inviting them to apply for the current year's program. Information regarding the reimbursement program information was also disseminated via the GOECD monthly newsletter.

### *Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohorts (EC4) Expansion*

The Illinois Board of Higher Education is planning dissemination activities in Q3, following end-of-Year One reporting by the institutions (due July 31, 2021). These dissemination activities will include a summary of Year One candidate retention, credential completion, and demographic information; a summary of the candidate survey results in Spring 2021; and a final Year One report.

### *Gateways: Infant/Toddler Credential Modules*

The Request for Proposals (RFP) opportunity was shared with faculty and deans at the Gateways to Opportunity Higher Education Forum (April 2020). The Gateways higher education listserv, which includes all entitled higher education institutions, was also used to announce the RFP opportunity.

### *ECE Competency-Based B.A. Program*

Virtual information sessions were held between April and mid-May, 2021. National Louis University also conducted outreach to participants via phone and email. Individual consultations with students for the purpose of assisting them with completing their applications, FAFSA, and securing their transcripts were also completed for this initiative.

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## *Family Specialist Credential Modules*

Over 150 faculty and deans at two- and four-year institutions were contacted about partnering in becoming entitled for the Gateways Family Specialist Credential.

## *ECE Level 5 to PEL Pathway*

Direct email and outreach to institutions that have a Professional Educator License (PEL) program were initiated. From the 30 institutions contacted, 16 or 53% will be participating in this work. Additionally, institutions who do not have faculty capacity to join in the actual project work will be kept informed at mid-point and project completion so their students/incumbent workforce can still benefit from the project outcomes.

## *Prior Learning Assessment Articulation/Transfer Planning*

Email announcements were sent to higher education institutions introducing the Prior Learning Assessment project using the Gateways listserv. Additional emails were sent to higher education institutions/faculty inviting them to participate in a series of meetings regarding a statewide PLA system, including transferability and virtual accessibility tied to the Gateways ECE Credential Level 2. Thirty-nine institutions responded to the email outreach to participate in the kick-off with more 70 faculty, deans and registrars attending.

## **5. Other activities**

### *Facilitating Attuned Interactions Training (FAN)*

While the PDG B-5 grant does not explicitly fund Erikson's Diversity/Equity/Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, this project will continue to be informed and improved by Erikson's FAN Team DEI initiatives such as: conducting a FAN curriculum review with a DEI lens, planning Community of Practice on Social Justice FAN Practitioners and BIPOC Support Group, and offering leadership coaching/supports to FAN trainers.

### *Inclusion Professional Development System*

Early CHOICES (outside of PDG B-5 funds) is providing the three PDG B-5 ExceleRate Pilot sites with inclusion kits for ages 0-3 and 3-5. The kits are composed of materials to support understanding learning differences, increasing peer interactions, and supporting adaptations within the routine of the day. Early CHOICES also provided each site with a CARA's kit for Infant Toddlers and one for Preschoolers.

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## *Gateways: Education Reimbursement*

Emails were sent to 2020 reimbursement recipients to gather feedback on the program and gain and understanding of where recipients are after receiving a reimbursement.

## *Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohorts (EC4) Expansion*

Continued regularly scheduled conversations with Year One program leaders were held with each institution. Fall 2021 surveys were issued for institutions to send to Year One candidates in an effort to secure Spring 2022 findings from this cohort. The Year One "post-survey" results will be available in Q3.

## *Family Specialist Credential Modules*

Meetings were held virtually with interested institutions to answer questions and encourage participation.

## **6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

### *Facilitating Attuned Interactions Training (FAN)*

In Q3, the cohort of Supervisor FAN training (Supervisor/ Practitioner) will continue for the twenty supervisors; a Train-the-Trainer for Practitioner FAN will be conducted to expand Head Start's capacity to provide FAN training to front-line staff of programs after the grant (trainer team of two); and Community of Practice Meetings targeting Head Start/Early Head Start Programs will be held.

### *Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

In Q3, Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC) will: launch six family child care sites for implementation; continue to support implementation for six child care centers and four ExceleRate Pilot programs; continue dissemination of ePyramid Module codes; continue virtual live training events; and continue monthly Process Coach calls for child care sites.

### *Gateways Registry: Pyramid Model Trainers & Coaches*

In Q3, INCCRRA will: maintain the database of Registry-Approved Pyramid Model trainings; continue support and administration of Relationship Based Professional Development within child care programs; and continue evaluation of Pyramid Model Implementation Sites and Pyramid Model Consortium professional development events.

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## *Inclusion Professional Development System*

In Q3, Early CHOICES will: continue Community of Practice (CoP) meetings; continue monthly meetings with ExceleRate Pilot sites; set up a training/meeting for three pilot child care centers to meet together to learn about MOUs and referral expectations; and support a National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations Pivotal Practices Training for the three communities.

## *Gateways Registry: Home Visiting Enhancement*

In Q3, the project will be completed once a final demographic report on Illinois' home visiting workforce is received and approved. A presentation will be given on the report to the Early Learning Council's Home Visiting Task Force and will be disseminated via numerous channels (more information to be provided in the Q3 report).

## *Competency-Based Education (CBE) Modularization*

In Q3, a meeting will be held with faculty and consultants. Student and faculty surveys will be distributed, and monthly meetings will be held with faculty.

## *Gateways: Linkage Project*

In Q3, review of Gateway Registry enhancements to increase utilization by Day Care Licensing Representatives (DCLRs) in the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will continue. In addition, options will be explored to increase the number of school-based Preschool for All professionals (teachers and paraprofessionals) in the Gateways Registry.

## *Gateways: Credential Fees*

Messaging for the credential application fee waiver will continue to be disseminated via multiple information sharing platforms. The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) will collect a range of workforce demographic and credential attainment data for aggregate reporting purposes.

## *Gateways: Education Reimbursements*

During Q2, 22.6% of project funds were expended. The INCCRRA plans to have sixty percent of funds allocated to eligible providers by September 30, 2021. Additionally, the data analysis will begin.

## *Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohorts (EC4) Expansion*

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) will have the Year One "post-survey" results available in Q3. IBHE will continue to work with grantees to expand Year Two

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cohort plans with additional funds, as well as execute amendments accordingly. Year Two funds will be dispersed in installments per the terms of the amended agreements with institutions. A Year Two summary of candidate demographics will be available in Q3 or the beginning of Q4. IBHE will continue quarterly calls with recipient institutions.

## *Gateways: Infant/Toddler Credential Modules*

The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) will review the selection and announcement of partnering higher education institutions and complete MOUs/contracts. State and national project consultants will complete their agreements/sign contracts. Competency teams will be established and develop cycles to ensure the completion of modules within the calendar year. A minimum of one third of the competency modules will be developed and reviewed.

## *Gateways Scholarship Program*

INCCRRA will continue to review and accept applications for the Gateway Scholarship Program. Funds will be allocated for eligible providers. INCCRRA estimates that fifty percent of scholarship funds will be obligated to eligible applicants by September 30, 2021.

## *ECE Competency-Based B.A. Program*

National Louis University (NLU) will continue to support participating students with the goal of the students persisting through the program.

## *Family Specialist Credential Modules*

INCCRRA will support the higher education institutions to align their programs to become entitled for the Gateways to Opportunity Family Specialist Credential.

## *ECE Level 5 to PEL Pathway*

The Competency-Based Education Network will bring national guidance and expertise in competency development, early childhood, and licensure to this initiative. The four-year higher education institutions will be engaged in the project through a modified Request for Proposal (RFP) process resulting in contracts/MOUs. Institutions selected to partner in the project will receive funding to buy-out designated (or appointed) faculty time.

## *Prior Learning Assessment Articulation/Transfer Planning*

Consultants will facilitate a series of meetings convened by INCCRRA with the contracted higher education institutions to build knowledge of Prior Learning Assessment and review Early Childhood Education Credential Competencies.

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**Activity 5: Improving Quality/Service Integration, Expanding Access**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments**

*ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

During Q2, thirty-five centers continued paying the enhanced salaries and hiring additional staff. Based on Q1 findings, GOECD created a new funding model to be tested in the new state fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2021), and the centers completed budgeting and contracting using the new model. The McCormick Center performed baseline ERS assessments, providing data to each center for quality improvement work. The Pyramid Model Team began their work with four centers, and the Early CHOICES Team began their work with three centers.

*ExceleRate Family Child Care Pilot*

During Q2, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) issued contracts to three Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to engage family child care associations and licensed family child care providers to plan and begin building provider-facilitated peer learning teams to support Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Activities are scheduled to begin on July 1, 2021.

*ExceleRate Pilot: Online Payroll Reporting System*

During Q2, the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) and GOECD began the process of identifying the business requirements and system design needed to support the use of the Gateways Director Portal for reporting payroll information to facilitate rate payments in the new contracting model.

*Community Planning for Expansion*

The initial "test" community, Elgin, Illinois, has been very active, working with Illinois Action for Children in data and family engagement workshops and making plans based on that guidance. The five Cohort 1 communities following Elgin have organized local planning groups and began the onboarding process for participants.

**2. Problems**

*ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

During Q2, business acumen continued to present as a priority educational need for directors. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and GOECD are exploring external partnerships to assist directors. Centers continued to experience the impact of COVID-19 on both enrollment and staffing. These issues continue to challenge

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evaluation on the impact of CQI and the impact of the Pilot salary scale to reduce turnover.

## *Community Planning for Expansion*

While COVID-19 challenges began to lessen, it was still difficult for some public school districts to focus on this work in addition to their work formulating revised COVID-related policies.

### **3. Significant findings and events**

#### *ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

While the funding model developed for the first contract period (November 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) provided a mechanism to learn baseline salaries and financial requirements to raise salaries to the minimum Pilot salary scale, this original funding model proved too labor intensive to be sustained. Through data collection and lessons learned from directors, a new funding model was developed during Q2. This new model will be implemented and tested beginning with the new State FY22 contract period beginning July 1, 2021.

#### *Community Planning for Expansion*

One significant finding is that key stakeholders in communities were unaware of the slot gap, particularly for publicly funded services for 0-2-year-old children. Provision of accessible data has been important.

### **4. Dissemination activities**

#### *ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

GOECD shared the ExceleRate Illinois Pilot Funding Mechanism Interim Report, June 2021 with stakeholders.

#### *Community Planning for Expansion*

Illinois Action for Children has drafted a "lessons learned" report to inform the State's larger community-systems-building initiative. Final edits are underway.

### **5. Other activities – N/A**

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**6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

*ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

Activities for Q3 include testing the new contract funding model, continued collection of data for evaluation, and continued recruitment of an ExceleRate Pilot Support Specialist at GOECD to aggregate and analyze financial and quality data.

*ExceleRate Family Child Care Pilot*

In Q3, three Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies will recruit local family child care associations and other providers to engage in planning provider-led CQI activities. They will begin to test the activities included in the plans.

*ExceleRate Pilot: Online Payroll Reporting System*

Activities for Q3 include developing phase 1 enhancements to the Gateways Registry Director Portal with a section for ExceleRate programs to enter payroll information to support Pilot contract rate payments. Future use of this database will also guide directors through the process to build their budgets for annual contracts.

*Community Planning for Expansion*

In Q3, workshops and facilitated planning will continue in Elgin and in the five Cohort 1 communities. Cohort 2 workshops and data sharing will begin.

**Activity 6: Monitoring, Evaluation, & Data Use for Continuous Improvement**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments**

*Data Linkage (IDHS & ISBE) & Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) 2.0 Functionality*

As part of the process to improve data quality and capacity to support future analytics, research, and reporting, an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) was initiated and executed between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT). Since the renewal of the IGA, a data sharing agreement to build a proof of concept has been executed. IBM services conducted two training workshops for engaged State Agencies, an IBM Watson Knowledge Catalog expert has been brought on to support data governance

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development, and data integration has been initiated with two State Agencies. The Illinois Department of Human Services Early Intervention initial data integration is complete with data elements from the IDHS Child Care Management System mapped.

## *Data Modeling & Demographic Crosswalk*

In Q2 the following was accomplished: the Illinois Department of Human Services databases through the Illinois Longitudinal Data System Early Childhood Participation Data Project was successfully connected with IBM Cloud Pak for Data. OKTA, the State's latest Single Sign On, multifactor authentication identity management system was integrated into CP4D.

## *Data Accessibility & Literacy*

In Q2, Pixo (chosen vendor working with the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM)) completed the work begun in FY2020 of developing a new user interface for the IECAM website. Pixo has been retained for ongoing maintenance for FY22 under the IECAM contract (funded by ISBE).

## *Licensing Process Modernization*

Meetings were held with Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensing supervisors to continue conversations around increased utilization of the Registry by the Day Care Licensing Representatives (DCLRs). A contract was executed with a consulting firm specializing in Zendesk, the software used for the Gateways Registry Help Desk. The goal of the contract is to ensure the software is set up to provide an efficient platform that will allow for DCLRs to receive priority support as they increase the ways in how they interact with the Gateways Registry.

## **2. Problems**

### *Data Linkage (IDHS & ISBE) & Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) 2.0 Functionality*

Data sharing agreements require multiple layers of review and time to process. Challenges include integrating data from multiple sources and multiple agencies. Support continues to build data governance within and among the agencies, with progress made during Q2 adding clarification to the scope of work to strengthen the roles and responsibilities of various users.

### *Licensing Process Modernization*

There has been some delay in obtaining an overview of the tablet-based monitoring software used by DCFS. An overview has been requested to determine if the Gateways Registry is compatible with the system in an effort to streamline the process for DCLRs.

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**3. Significant findings and events**

*Data Linkage (IDHS & ISBE) & Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) 2.0 Functionality*

Integration of OKTA, the State's largest Single Sign On, multifactor authentication identity management system into CP4D will enable internal and external users to access CP4D. Access has been granted to staff at Northern Illinois University.

*Data Modeling & Demographic Crosswalk*

Establishment of enhanced governance and legal agreements associated with the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) 2.0 continue. Discussions related to integration of Head Start/Early Head Start data with state-level infrastructure continue with the establishment of a Data Task Force within the Illinois Head Start Association.

**4. Dissemination activities – N/A**

**5. Other activities – N/A**

**6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

*Data Linkage (IDHS & ISBE) & Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) 2.0 Functionality*

Bi-weekly discussions between GOECD, DoIT, the Governor's Office, and ISBE have continued to develop the project. Support has been provided to assist agencies in loading data into the ILDS 2.0 standardized analysis platform.

*Data Modeling & Demographic Crosswalk*

In Q3, Illinois will complete initial steps to design the approach to data integration.

*Data Accessibility & Literacy*

In Q3, University of Illinois will provide technical assistance in the creation of data dictionaries, standardization of demographic variables, and data manipulation to support needed analysis.

*Licensing Process Modernization*

In Q3, Illinois will gather input from center directors and family child care providers regarding their use of the Gateways Registry to prepare for licensing visits and to remain in compliance with paperwork requirements. Additionally, Illinois will identify the business requirements and system design needed to support modernization of DCFS licensing utilization of the Gateways Registry. Finally, Illinois will develop Phase 1 enhancements to the Gateways Registry for: 1) Director Portal for directors and family

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child care providers functionality, 2) DCLR Portal to facilitate validation of center staff and family child care provider qualifications, and 3) DCLR tables to align with modernization efforts.

## **Bonus Activities**

### **1. Major activities and accomplishments**

#### *Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

In preparation for the launch of the Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS) tool by goal date of August 2021, all four communities are on track and in the third phase out of five in the implementation process. The work includes refining the community vision for the use of IRIS, strengthening and refining partnerships in their respective IRIS networks, configuring the IRIS intake forms, and finalizing shared community expectations on the use of IRIS.

#### *I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

The Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/ECMHC) Professional Development Coordinator contractual position at the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) was filled by Crystal Elliott-O'Connor. INCCRRA recruited presenters, coordinated sessions, and opened registration for the July 2021 I/ECMHC Orientation. A new Reflective Learning Group (RLG) facilitator and group members were identified; the contract is pending. Another RLG facilitator has been identified and contract may be forthcoming due to increased demand. An RLG Overview and Interest Form were created that can be shared with all current RLG members and consultants who may be interested in joining an RLG.

INCCRRA continues to process applications for the [I/ECMH Consultant Database](#) and provided technical assistance to individuals needing help with joining the Gateways Registry. More than 50 applications have been received. Works continues around the development of the activity tracking portal for I/ECMH Consultant use, and discussions and requirements around outcomes data tracking.

#### *Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): In Q2, WADI continued their virtual collaboration planning on Conscious Discipline and collected mid-year check-in survey data from staff. WADI is brainstorming solutions to address the collaboration meeting's low attendance,

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including a marketing campaign to address a possible stigma about Head Start within the community, as well as no substitute coverage for teachers to attend the meetings. WADI also created K-transition folders for families that included important information for Kindergarten registration and distributed the first set of Kindergarten readiness packs to begin summer programs. WADI continues to engage the public schools to ensure they provide pictures for K-transition "field trips" that allow children to maintain current COVID-19 restrictions while viewing their school, classroom, or teacher prior to making their transition.

United Way – East St. Louis: In Q2, United Way planned for the Week of the Young Child and held community wide planning meetings during which stakeholders gave feedback about the K-transition plan and the group drafted a final action plan focused on family engagement and Social Emotional Learning (SEL). A racial equity assessment was also performed on the K-transition priorities. Several equity-focused action items were developed for each priority and metrics will be identified to measure the success of pilot during the next two years. United Way also conducted community outreach, hosting "sip and discuss" sessions around K-transition (attended by 20 families), distributing K-transition kits to all pre-k students including three-year-olds, and ensuring completion of 100 stakeholder surveys where over 50% of the respondents were parents.

Austin Coming Together (ACT): ACT and partner, Austin Childcare Providers' Network (ACPN), continued meetings with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) local network personnel to discuss goals and ways to interact with local community schools; it was decided a clear written plan of engagement was needed to foster effective engagement between CPS and ACT to make expectations for both parties clear. ACT and APCN selected the child care providers that will participate in the pilot this year and had a meet and greet to discuss curriculum and coaching (10 participants representing four child care programs participated). Currently, ACPN is looking to contract with Chapin Hall to support the evaluation process. ACT and ACPN continue to participate in ongoing meetings with GOECD to strategize actions, as well as with their Core Planning Team to review progress and obtain feedback on plans for the child care provider's training and coaching.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI): In Q2, BPI conducted two successful teacher team meetings to discuss family engagement ideas after COVID-19. BPI also had meetings with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) about continued planning and to strengthen the partnership around professional development. BPI conducted meetings with their partners to brainstorm ideas about enrollment challenges and

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retention, on being able to collaborate with local service agencies to distribute marketing materials to families on the importance of preschool. BPI was also able to identify a candidate for the family liaison position, which has been difficult to fill. Ending the school year, BPI hosted a brief in-person and then virtual family night where they distributed their transition bags to children transitioning to Kindergarten and supported schools with multiple end-of-year transition activities.

## **2. Problems**

### *I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

Securing continuing education units via the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Professional Regulation Division has been a struggle due to their staffing issues. Significantly delayed responses to calls and emails, as well as receiving inconsistent information regarding sponsor applications, have been a recurring experience.

### *Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): A substitute teacher shortage led to low attendance at collaboration meetings. It has also been a challenge for WADI to get schools to send photos of main areas that are used as part of K-transition virtual "field trip" to support the Kindergarten transition.

United Way – East St. Louis: Teacher and family member burnout due to the extended school year and stress from COVID-19 has led to decreased engagement.

Austin Coming Together (ACT): ACT is working to make revisions to the workplan submitted to CPS. GOECD is in the process of hiring a Senior Data Analyst, which is needed by CPS in addition to a data sharing agreement. This delay has caused ACT to pivot and pause some of the original planned work. ACT is struggling to appropriately capture the data for what is learned with child care providers, children, and families so ACPN has secured a funder to develop an evaluation process for the work with child care providers and families.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI): Data collection was a challenge due to the remote learning environment. BPI could not conduct the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) since some students were home. Teachers are concerned about what data will be available and used for the K-transition.

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### **3. Significant findings and events**

#### *Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

On May 19, 2021, the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (KU-CPPR) facilitated the first quarterly Learning Community for the four home visiting communities. The Learning Community focused on providing an overview of each community's implementation progress and a discussion on sustaining IRIS in the communities.

#### *I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

With the completion of the evaluation of the Illinois I/ECMHC Model by Chapin Hall, changes to the Model are needed. Plans to update the model have begun with the input from statewide early childhood systems.

#### *Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): The WADI team wondered if low school teacher turnout at collaboration meetings is due to a stigma within the community associated with children in Head Start having challenging behavior. This misunderstood stigma may lead teachers to question attending professional development sponsored by Head Start.

Austin Coming Together (ACT): In Q2, ACT realized the importance of using an Action Plan as a tool to productively collaborate with a large institution like CPS. There were challenges aligning next steps due to the engagement of principals, network administrators, and the Chief of Early Childhood Education at different times throughout the quarter. To ameliorate this issue, ACT developed an Action Plan that outlines next year's activities and responsibilities.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI): BPI noted that overall teachers experienced an extremely difficult school year. The transition program continues to serve as an important opportunity for teachers to align, coordinate, and learn together.

### **4. Dissemination activities**

#### *Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

There have been no dissemination activities outside of the project. Within the project, the GOECD provided a quarterly referral data summary for each of the communities.

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## *I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

The I/ECMH Consultant Form to enroll in the Searchable Consultant Database continued to be sent to all current consultants that have completed the Orientation to the Illinois Model of I/ECMHC and the 200 members on the I/ECMHC listserv. Emails were sent for registration for the July 2021 Orientation and the July 2021 I/ECMHC Quarterly call.

## *Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): WADI hosted a Collaboration Meeting and recorded it on Zoom. Teachers that were interested but unable to attend were emailed a link to the recorded meeting and pre-survey. Prizes were also delivered to teachers who attended the meeting.

United Way – East St. Louis: Family liaisons conducted outreach to families through door-to-door canvassing and tabling and local businesses. They provided information about kindergarten transitions and readiness by passing out the flyers developed at the beginning of the pilot. The liaisons also conducted outreach meetings with centers to support readiness activities.

## **5. Other activities**

### *Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

GOECD and the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research continue to hold regular bi-weekly technical assistance and consultation calls with each of the pilot communities.

## *I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

The framework of the annual Consultant Retreat was revised, moving to a Symposium that is a combination of state leadership in the early childhood systems and the private sector as leaders in this effort.

## *Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): WADI created lesson plans, ordered materials, and assembled packets for the Summer Program which began in June and will continue into next quarter.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI): BPI provided the Altgeld Riverdale Early Learning Coalition with a full briefing on the activities of the Pre-K to K Transitions program, including a survey before the briefing to assess stakeholders' understanding of the program.

Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD)  
Performance Progress Report - PDG B-5 Renewal  
Quarter 2 - Date: June 29, 2021

**6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

*Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

The University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research will facilitate the next quarterly IRIS Learning Community for the four pilot home visiting communities. The pilot communities are planning to launch IRIS in August 2021.

*I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

In Q3, INCCRRA will: deliver an Orientation event; maintain and expand Reflective Learning Groups; provide for State System Communications and Connectors; provide ongoing logistics, supports, and technology for professional development delivery and data tracking; support and maintain the statewide I/ECMH Consultant database through the Gateways Registry; implement, support, and maintain the I/ECMH Consultation Activity Tracker database; discuss and identify requirements around outcomes data tracking; and produce I/ECMHC reports and resources.

*Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): In Q3, WADI plans to: complete the Summer Program and review data; complete the virtual field trips introducing new Kindergarten students to their new school; review the transition folders and hand deliver them to the schools; and continue the Conscious Discipline training with new/returning families.

United Way – East St. Louis: In Q3, United Way plans to complete the 2021-2022 implementation plan and three year strategic plan based on community planning sessions during Nov 2020 – May 2021; complete and release the Year One report to community members; develop and launch the curriculum action team, which will be responsible for creating kindergarten readiness messaging; and identify workshop topics for the family engagement events.

Austin Coming Together (ACT): In Q3, ACT will: work with an evaluator and funder to develop evaluation design and matrices for the program implementation in Year One; finalize an action plan that maps out the relationship/partnership between ACT/ACPN and CPS; conduct Creative Curriculum training and pre-assessments with a cohort of child care providers; and continue convening bi-weekly core planning meetings.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI): In Q3, BPI plans to launch the family liaison role (inclusive of work plan, training, ongoing outreach and family/teacher support through COVID-19), and implement a professional development calendar over the course of the 2021/2022 school year during workshops.